BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENT
CONFERENCE REPORT

SUBJECT: NHDOT Monthly Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting
DATE OF CONFERENCE: June 15, 2016
LOCATION OF CONFERENCE: John O. Morton Building
ATTENDED BY:

NHDOT
Matt Urban
Ron Crickard
Carolyn Lamb
Mark Hemmerlien
Carol Niewola
Anthony Weatherbee

Army Corps of Engineers
Michael Hicks

NHDES
Gino Infascelli

NH Fish & Game
Carol Henderson

NH Natural Heritage Bureau
Amy Lamb

Consultants/Public Participants
Nick Golon
Chris Danforth
Christine Perron
Darren Blood
Jenifer Mercer
Michael Rogerson
Kim Peace
Andrew Pomeroy
Jared Sheehan

(When viewing these minutes online, click on an attendee to send an e-mail)

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NOTES ON CONFERENCE:

Finalization of March 16 Meeting Minutes

The March 16 meeting minutes were finalized. Matt Urban indicated that he had received a few comments prior to this meeting and that he has incorporated those into the minutes. No objections to finalizing the minutes.

Hooksett, 14950, Non-Federal

No Minutes Received to Date

This project was previously reviewed on the following dates: 4/17/2013

North Hampton, 24457, X-A002(909)
Darren Blood introduced the project. This is the first time this project has been presented at the Natural Resource Agency meeting. The goal of the project is to rehabilitate or replace the US Route 1 Bridge (148/132) over the former B&M Railroad and to improve the North Road intersections that are located approximately 300' apart to the north and south of the bridge. The bridge is on the 2016 Red List. The existing skew and slope of the intersections create deficient geometry, contributing to a high accident rate along this section of US Route 1.

US Route 1 is a Minor Urban Arterial carrying 17,000 vehicles per day. This is an important local route for north-south transport, businesses, and residents of the Seacoast Region. The route is not currently a designated bicycle route since there are other lower traffic volume alternatives available for bicycles. The construction period for the project is dependent on the traffic control method employed. Currently, a short-term closure of US Route 1 with the use of Accelerated Bridge Construction (ABC) techniques is anticipated.

The project is still in the preliminary design phase and is currently funded for construction in Fiscal Year 2021 in the Draft 10-year plan.

Jennifer Mercer provided additional details on the project. US Route 1 is posted for 45mph with one travel lane in the north and south directions and a tapering center lane throughout the project limits. The North Hampton Police Department has documented 18 accidents in the last 6 years at the North Road/US Route 1 intersections. The project proposes intersection safety improvements, including the relocation of the intersections of North Road (West) and North Road (East) with US Route 1 and adjustments to the roadway profile to provide a flatter, longer approach to each intersection.

The existing intersections are approximately 300' apart and the proposed improvements would place them 800' apart. US Route 1 through the project area has 12' travel lanes, a center turn lane of approximately 10', and shoulders that vary from 2' to 3'. The proposed typical section consists of 12' travel lanes and center turn lane, with 4' or 5' shoulders for improved safety. This results in an increase in impervious area of about 10,000 square feet. US Route 1 profile adjustments will be minor and improvements will be accomplished with step-box widening. North Road (West) and North Road (East) will be full depth reconstruction. The existing paved area surface drainage sheet flows from the roadway with no closed drainage. Sections of US Route 1 north of the bridge will be curbed with closed drainage to collect runoff for water quality enhancement.

The existing bridge was constructed in 1935. It is currently on the Red List and is the 2015 Bridge Priority #33. The concrete tee beam superstructure is in poor condition with multiple areas of cracking, leaking,

spalling, delamination, and exposed rebar. The overall condition of the substructure warrants consideration for rehabilitation and the US Route 1 horizontal alignment has been designed holding the substructure limits. Bridge alternatives are currently being developed.

With the shortest detour around the bridge on State highways being 16.5 miles, traffic control during construction is critical. As a result, a short duration closure of US Route 1 by implementing ABC techniques is the current traffic control method under consideration. Phased construction was investigated but dismissed.

Christine Perron provided an overview of resources in the project area. The project is located approximately 900' east of the Little River and 1,000' west of the North River. No areas of the project are subject to Shoreland Protection and there are no stream crossings or mapped floodplains in the project area. Wetlands are located along both legs of North Road and along the railroad corridor south of the bridge. The wetlands nearest the bridge are wet ditches along the rail corridor. North Hampton is located in the Coastal Zone but there are no tidally influenced streams or wetlands in the project area. Invasive plants are located throughout the project area and will be addressed during construction. The project is not located within watersheds listed as impaired on the 2014 303(d) list. As the scope is better defined, appropriate stormwater treatment will be identified. Section 106 consultation is still ongoing to determine the project's effect on historic resources. This rail line is known to be a linear historic district and an inventory form on the bridge itself is underway to determine its individual eligibility.

The USFWS Officials Species List reports the possible presence of northern long-eared bat and red knot. The potential for impacts to bats will be assessed once the limits of tree clearing are better defined. The bridge was examined for signs of bat usage but no signs were observed. The red knot is a sandpiper that uses coastal habitat during migration; this species is not expected to occur in the project area. The Natural Heritage Bureau reported a known population of the State endangered slender blue iris in the field along North Road (West). A few stems were identified in the field during the wetland delineation; however recent mowing made it difficult to fully document the extent of the population. This plant was not seen in the wet ditch located between the field and North Road. Impacts to the field are not anticipated. Coordination with the NHB will take place once the project footprint is better defined.

Amy Lamb asked if slender blue iris was seen in other wetlands in the project area. C. Perron replied that the plant was not identified elsewhere in the project.

Ron Crickard asked if the rail corridor is an active trail or an abandoned line. D. Blood responded that this is an out of service rail line that the State is in the process of acquiring. There has been some discussion about a future rail trail, but this is not currently a formal trail. The project will likely maintain the opening through the bridge to accommodate any future rail and trail use.

Carol Henderson asked if the height of the bridge would be maintained in order to provide an adequate opening for wildlife passage. D. Blood stated that the existing clearance of 25' would either remain the same or decrease slightly.

Mike Hicks stated that, since FHWA is the lead federal agency for the project, Section 7 clearance on northern long-eared bat would be obtained via the FHWA Programmatic Consultation for any impacts to the bridge or trees.

C. Henderson asked if the project would be presented at a future coordination meeting. C. Perron replied that it likely wouldn't be necessary to return to another meeting prior to the completion of NEPA. However, the project would return prior to permitting if any permits are required.

No further questions or concerns were raised with the project as presented.

This project has not been previously discussed at a Monthly Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting.

Pease Airport:
This Meeting was to present the Obstruction Removal and Lighting Project at Portsmouth International Airport at Pease. The project is proposed to remove approximately 28 acres of trees and vegetation that have grown to interfere with airspace around the airport and to install two lights. Construction is anticipated in the summer of 2017.

Completion of the NEPA process resulted in in a significant reduction of obstruction removal required. Mitigation of some obstructions that are unable to be removed will be accomplished through addition of two lights, one to the north and one to the south of the runway, both of which will be located on airport property. The final project scope avoids impacts to the 75' prime wetland buffer in Newington, and potential impacts to the Newington Historic District and the Pickering Property, which is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

The project will require a wetland permit and an AoT permit. Approximately 2.5 acres identified for tree removal are estimated to be in wetlands based on historic delineations at the airport. Wetlands will be delineated in the summer of 2016. Wetland impacts will be due to conversion of forested wetlands to scrub-shrub wetlands. G. Infascelli confirmed that he will be the wetland permit reviewer for NHDES.

The Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge (GBNWR) lies just to the west of the airport & project. C. Henderson was asked about who the contact was at the GBNWR. K. Peace stated that she will submit that information.

A USFWS IPAC review was completed and USFWS requested a northern long-eared bat survey, which was completed in summer of 2015 and resulted in no findings. Red knot was also listed on the IPAC but is not a concern at this site. NH Natural Heritage Bureau (NHB) coordination was completed during NEPA. The NHB review indicated two plant species of concern present on the airport, Hairy hudsonia and Northern blazing star. A field survey was undertaken to identify the locations of these plants. K. peace stated these areas are not within the areas identified for tree removal, but will be avoided and flagged during construction. A. Lamb requested the NHB review number and to be sent the coordination information completed to date. Hoyle Tanner agreed to provide what that information. C. Henderson asked about the birds identified in the NHNHB review, and K. Peace stated that she will send that information to Carol Henderson, but that Kim Tuttle of NH Fish and Game had reviewed the project in 2015 and determined there to be no impact on the listed bird species. C. Henderson asked about the presence of Blanding's turtles. K. Peace said there was none listed. Because the NHB review expired in April 2015, it will need to be resubmitted during wetland permitting. C. Henderson suggested the use of natural coco fiber matting for site stabilization due to the reduced impact on wildlife.

M. Hicks stated that the ACOE wetland General Permit would not be needed unless there is fill in wetlands. K. Peace noted that no fill is anticipated, and that impacts are only due to conversion from forested to scrub-shrub wetlands, however swamp matting may be required for temporary access. Obstruction lights are to be located all in uplands. M. Hicks stated that swamp matting may be considered as a temporary impact, which would require a permit and review of secondary water quality impacts. Discussion of using low ground pressure equipment as an alternative to swamp mats ensued, as well as the potential to remove trees during frozen conditions, and M. Rogerson stated the plans will be examined to

see if it is feasible to avoid ACOE permitting. A maintenance road may also be required for long-term maintenance of wetland vegetation, but plans will be reviewed to avoid such a road where feasible. M. Rogerson described the planned treatment of upland areas by "Forestry Mulching" where the ground and stumps are ground to a depth of a few inches, leaving behind a mat of soil and wood chips that would eventually re-populate with native grasses and could be maintained by brush hogging in the future. Wetland areas will be ground flush to the surface with no soil disturbance. M. Hicks stated that if swamp matting must be used and an ACOE permit required, once the areas of impact were identified a second meeting should be held, including the EPA to discuss possible secondary impacts.

G. Infascelli has information about Prime Wetlands on the west side of the airfield in Newington and asked if there were any impacts to this wetland, and requested that this be investigated and shown on the plans relative to the project areas. M. Rogerson stated that Pease has their own zoning and have not designated any wetlands as prime on the Pease property.

This project has not been previously discussed at a Monthly Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting.

Rumney, 40569, Non-Federal

The bridge carries Quincy Road over an unnamed brook. The bridge has a 16' span and it is a concrete arch that has been widened. Streamflow is currently directed into the upstream wingwall. Sediment is proposed to be removed in order to direct flow back into the center of the structure to improve flow.

Toewalls will be poured in order to repair the deterioration between the foundations and the abutments and wingwalls.

There are forested wet areas adjacent to the stream and Gino Infascelli said he would like to review the delineated plan.

Carol Henderson asked if stream flow would be maintained in the natural channel via sandbags and diverting half at a time. Tony said yes.

It is a Tier 3 watershed with 1.13 square mile watershed.

G. Infascelli said that mitigation may be required. The DOT will send a copy of the plan to DES so he can discuss with Lori Sommer after field reviewing the location.
Mike Hicks asked about tree clearing. Tony said that he will check and if cutting will take place he will follow up with NELB.

This project has not been previously discussed at a Monthly Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting.

Sunapee 112/074, non-federal, 41013

The bridge is located on Rte. 103B over Sucker Brook. It has an 18' span and is 30' wide. The scope of the project is to replace the deck. There is a beaver dam downstream that is ponding water, causing the water level to be 6" down from the soffit.

Temporary impacts are required for scaffolding and for access. Sandbags cofferdams may be used to dewater.

The crossing has a watershed of 1.3 square miles therefore it is a Tier 3 crossing.

Gino Infascelli suggested considering using floats to catch debris. Matt Urban suggested considering using sheet piles.

Gino Infascelli said that no mitigation would be required.

This project has not been previously discussed at a Monthly Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting.

Sunapee 067/078, non-federal, 41014
The bridge is located on Rte. 103 over Sugar River. It is a three span concrete slab bridge that is 45' wide and is supported on steel H-Piles.

The piles are rusted and they need to be plated and encased with concrete. Riprap will be placed around the concrete encasing and it will be placed level with the streambed. The concrete deck will be repaired.

There will be temporary impacts to provide for the repairs. The site will be accessed from the wetlands on the NE side.

Mike Hicks asked for info on NLEB coordination.

Gino Infascelli said that no mitigation is required as the impacts are only to protect existing infrastructure.

This project has not been previously discussed at a Monthly Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting.

Salem 095/052 & 098/049, non-federal, 41012
The bridge is located at the I-93 rest area entrance and exit. Both structures are similar twin multi plate arches.

Tony Weatherbee explained that concrete inverts will be installed in one pipe at a time.

Dewatering will be done with sandbag cofferdams. After the first invert is installed the dewatering will be switched a invert will be installed in the next pipe.

The headwalls will be repaired and riprap will be placed in front of them.

A hydraulic study has been done by VHB and it has been shown that the inverts will not decrease the hydraulic capacity of the structures.

Gino Infascelli noted that these structures were originally part of the I-93 job and there may have been a commitment made to fully replace the pipes. He said to ask Marc Lauren. G. Infascelli stated that concrete inverts are not allowed to be placed in Tier 3 watersheds. He instructed that it was required to show how the project will improve connectivity. He said that this can be done by showing what the ponded water elevation is after completion and what the water detpth would be during low flow. He said that it may be possible to install a low flow channel or to roughen the concrete.

There were no NHB records or impact.

This project has not been previously discussed at a Monthly Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting.